Mario Golf Madness: How Luigi Met Daisy
By Yu May

[Summary: A romantic comedy on the golf course! When Mario and Luigi compete for the title of the Toadstool Tour Champion, Princess Daisy arrives with a mad plan to confess her true feelings of love to Mario, the man who saved her life...only for her to meet Luigi for the very first time.

Author's Note: This short story is meant to be an amalgamation of the various Mario Golf games. Don't worry too much about continuity, nerds. It is a stand-alone spin-off for my book-length romantic adventure, *Bowser's Princess Lessons*, but can be read and enjoyed entirely on its own, without spoiling any major plot elements for my other stories.]

As the commercial break ends, an incredibly handsome, silver-haired man appears on your TV screen, wearing a black sleeveless shirt. "Hello, and welcome to the first annual Toadstool Tour Golf Championship. I'm Billy Iwata, former champion of the NES Open Golf Tournament."

The camera cuts to a middle aged man, wearing a fedora, which he tips with dazzling flair, while flashing a dashing smile. "And I'm Gene Yuss, the Greatest of the Great, former champion of the Links Club Circuit…before my crushing, humiliating defeat at the hands of the Mario brothers, forcing me to retire in shame from the noble sport of golf."

"That's right, Gene! And none other than Mario and Luigi themselves will both be competing for the championship title tonight, with all proceeds to benefit the Toad Society for Widows and Orphans."

Gene Yuss wipes a tear from his eye, with an air of sweet melancholy. "Ah, such a worthy cause! Joining us in the studio today is Azalea de Sarasa, President of the Mushroom Kingdom Academy Junior Golf League. Princess Azalea, welcome to the show."

The camera cuts to reveal a blushing Princess Azalea, an athletic girl of seventeen years, wearing a golf uniform. "Oh, dear, I'd really prefer if you call me just Azalea, please?"

Somehow, Gene Yuss tips his fedora with even more gentlemanly grace. "Your wish is my command, m'lady."

Billy Iwata's pecs and biceps bulge as he leans forward to face the camera, his eyes as sharp as his jawline. "So, *Just* Azalea, I understand Mario and Luigi have been volunteering their time to coach golf at the Mushroom Kingdom Academy. We all know of their prowess on the golf course. What's like being coached by the world famous Mario Brothers? I'll bet Coach Mario's a real task master!"

Azalea sighs with relief, and her face brightens up. "Oh, not at all! Sure, Mister Mario's not afraid to say something when I'm screwing up my swing, but he has such a way of explaining things,

without lecturing, ya know? We've all learned so much from Mister Mario, like how to control for spin, and adjust for wind resistance…and Mister Luigi…um…"

Azalea looks momentarily flustered, before flashing two big thumbs up. "...Mister Luigi taught me that no matter how many times I screw up, or feel like a loser, that I've just gotta' keep trying my best, no matter what! So, if my two favorite coaches are listening, thank you so much for all you've done for the kids at Mushroom Kingdom Academy, and for showing us what it means to dedicate your lives to helping others!"

Both Billy Iwata and Gene Yuss's eyes shine with admiration. "Aaaaaaw!"

Then, as the camera cuts to the B camera, Billy Iwata snaps to face it with impeccable timing. "Well, on that adorable note, let's take a short break, as we await the arrival of our competitors."

Gene Yuss tips his fedora with maximum coolness. "Don't go away, golf-fans. We'll be back with more pre-game analysis, after these messages…say, any word on where Luigi went to? If he doesn't show up soon, he'll forfeit the…Huh? What do you mean my mic's hot?"

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Mario sighed as he watched the news segment on the miniature CRT TV in the locker room. He was dressed in an All-American star-spangled uniform, with red-and-white striped overalls.
"That Azalea's a good kid."

Princess Peach snuck up and wrapped her arms around Mario from behind.
"She really is! Takes after her big sister, Daisy."

"Heh! Yeah, she was a real spitfire, that one. And I thought *you* were the most stubborn Princess I'd ever met."

Peach pretended to pout. "I thought you said I was the first princess you ever met?"

"Sure. And Daisy was the second. And she takes the trophy from you in the stubbornness department."

"Hmm…well, am I the most *something* princess you've ever met?"

Mario looked up at Peach, his mustache curling. "Eh, I can think of a few superlative adjectives to describe you, where you take the cake."

As Peach and Mario gazed longingly into each other's eyes, a piano melody from Franz Litz's *Liebesträume (Dreams of Love)* played softly over the Television. Suddenly, there was a loud banging from inside one of the lockers, and Mario and Peach both jumped into one another's arms. The locker burst open and Luigi tumbled from within.

Luigi stood up, looking dazed, “Phew! I thought I’d never get out of that locker!!”

Mario grabbed him by the shoulders. “Luigi? What were you doing in there? I thought you were…well, getting over the pre-game jitters.”

Luigi quickly straightened his cap. He was wearing an not-quite-All-American star-spangled uniform, with green-and-white striped overalls. “Oh, that! Well–ah–I sorta bumped into Wario, and we got to talking about the good old days back at Saint Pat’s, and then he sorta…tried to *relive* the good old days back at Saint Pat’s.”

Mario slammed his fist into his open hand. “That fat rat!”

Peach slammed her fist into her open hand. “I’ll pulverize him!”

Then Peach remembered that wasn’t a particularly appropriate expression for a princess to use, and cleared her throat.

Luigi put a hand on Mario’s shoulder. “No, Mario! I’ve got to start fighting my own battles, or I’ll never be able to handle myself when I randomly run into one of my many elementary-school bullies in adult life.”

Mario waved his hands, in Italian fashion. “But, but, Weege–”

Luigi waved his hands, in likewise fashion. “But, nothing! If you see Wario, you say nothing about this. I can handle that big palooka…so long as he doesn’t get the jump on me.”

Mario stretched his face. “Mamamia…Fine, have it your way. But if you need back up, you call me, cuz we Marios stick together!”

Luigi shrugged. “Ay, I’m a Mario, too. And *Luigi* Mario can handle himself! I’m no milk sop.”

Luigi Mario grabbed his golf bag, and tried to swing it dramatically over his shoulder, only to find it was too heavy for him to budge. With an effort, he strained to lift it with both arms, then turned to face Princess Peach, his whole body trembling under the burden. “Say…Princess Toadstool…sorry to spring this on you at the last minute but…would you do me the honor of being my caddy?”

Peach gasped softly, as she easily lifted Mario’s golf bag over one shoulder. “Oh, I’m so sorry, Luigi. I already promised to be Mario’s caddy today, and the league rules only allow one caddy per competitor.”

Luigi’s face turned pale as he tried to take a single, shaky step. “That’s…that’s no problem! I can handle my clubs…no problem!”

Peach put a dainty hand on Luigi's golf bag. "Luigi, dear, why don't we stop at the front desk? They'll be happy to get you a caddy!"

Luigi shook his head, his face turning blue. "Oof…I wouldn't want to inconvenience you, Princess. Anyway, it's just a golf bag! I'll just–"

Princess Peach tugged the golf bag from Luigi's grip and threw it over her other shoulder. "Nonsense! The front desk is on the way to the first tee. It's no trouble at all!"

Mario cleared his throat. "Eh, Princess? You want I should carry one of–"

Peach marched briskly toward the door, her smile frozen. "Tut, tut! I promised to be your caddy today, Mister Mario. And a Princess always keeps her promises! I'm carrying the bags!"

After Peach deposited Luigi's golf bag by the front desk, she rang the bell, and waved prettily at Mario. "Head on up to the course, Mario! I'll be right after you!"

With a shrug, Mario turned and strolled toward the golf course. As Peach turned back to face Luigi, she smiled sweetly, batting her eyelashes. "…And, Luigi, one last thing…I have a special favor to ask of you…"

As Peach leaned in close to Luigi, as if to kiss him, hearts appeared in Luigi's eyes. "Ahem…yes, Princess?"

Peach's face suddenly darkened as she grabbed Luigi by the back of the neck and whispered in his ear. "Be sure to bring your A-game! This is a championship game, and I want *killer* ratings…all the better to support the Toad Society for Widows and Orphans, you understand!"

Luigi nodded stiffly. "...Ah…okee dokee?"

Peach pinched the brim of Luigi's cap. "Thanks, Luigi. I really appreciate you doing all this for the children! Oh, and if you run into Azalea or Daisy, please tell them Peach says hi, and I want to catch up with them after the tournament."

"...Who's Daisy?"

Peach blinked. "You haven't met her? She's Azalea's older sister. We saved her from that creepy bat alien just last year!"

"A creepy bat alien? …Oh, I think Mario told me about that. I was–ah–stuck at home that week…reading. I didn't hear the part about another Princess. "

“I see. Well, you definitely haven’t met Princess Daisy then. I promise you, no one forgets meeting her. I’ll have to introduce the two of you…I think you’d quite like her. See you at tee time, Luigi!”

Luigi sighed as he watched Peach walking away from him, and after Mario. Ever since he and Mario had been sucked down a broken water pipe and into the Mushroom Kingdom, Luigi had, of course, been madly in love with the beautiful Princess Toadstool. But he’d never even managed to work up the courage to ask any girl out, let alone her. Luigi sighed. “Who’m I kidding? What chance does a guy like me have to land a princess?”

As Luigi turned to the front desk, a woman with tan skin and chestnut brown hair appeared from nowhere, roughly shoved him aside, “Oops, hi, I’m Daisy. Now, if you’ll just stand aside, I need to see a man about a horse…”

The strange woman slapped both her palms on the desk. “…Hey! Who’s in charge here? I want to enter this tournament!”

Luigi stumbled backwards, stunned at the sudden appearance of the strange, beautiful woman, then straightened his posture. “Um, excuse me, ma’am, but you just cut in line. You see, I’m here to–”

The mystery woman rounded on Luigi, and snatched him by the straps of his suspenders. “You’re here to compete? Awesome! That means we’re rivals! Now if we could just get some freakin’ service around here…”

The woman slammed her fist against the desk. “Where is the master of arms? I must prepare for the coming battle, at once!”

As the woman raised her fists high, Luigi found himself dangling in the air by his suspenders. “Um, I think you’re supposed to ring the bell for service?”

The woman blinked. “Ooo…good idea, big guy!”

Then, she dropped Luigi, and started ringing the bell as fast as possible. “Master of arms! Bring me a horse and armor, that I may challenge the lists!”

A crotchety old Toad appeared at the desk, adjusting his glasses. “Easy, easy! I ain’t dead yet! Whaddaya want, miss?”

The woman shook her fist, and hot fire seemed to blaze in her eyes. “Hearken to my words, for I, Princess Daisy of Sarasaland, have come here to win this tournament, and chew bubble gum, and I’m all out of bubble gum! I hereby challenge all comers to face me in glorious combat, especially my best friends, Princess Peach and Mario!”

The Toad shook his head. “Oy, yoi yoi! You can’t just enter the tournament, miss. It’s the championship round, between Mister Mario and…”

The Toad adjusted his glasses as he finally noticed Luigi, “...oh, hey Mister Mario.”

Daisy spun to look Luigi dead in the eye. “Mario?”

Then hearts appeared in Daisy’s eyes, before pressing both hands against Luigi’s cheeks. “Mario!”

Daisy kissed Luigi full on the lips, before pulling him into a tight hug against her bosom. “It’s so good to see you again, Mario! Ever since you saved me from that bug-eyed alien fruitcake, all I can think about is how I’ve finally, *finally* found a man who’s tougher than me! I’ve crossed oceans and deserts to tell you something…I love you! I love you, I love you, I love you! Oh, won’t you please marry me, and make me the happiest girl on earth?”

As Daisy pulled away from Luigi, she blinked, then narrowed her eyes. “...Hang on, you’re not Mario!”

“No! I’m–”

Daisy leapt back, jabbing a finger in Luigi’s nose. “–An imposter! Spy! Assassin! You think you can fool me with that inept disguise? Well, I see right through you. Mario doesn’t wear striped overalls!”

The old toad tapped a poster which prominently featured Mario and Luigi, in their star-spangled golf outfits. “Oh, yes he does. It’s traditional!”

Daisy snapped her arm at the image of Luigi on the poster. “Well, Mario doesn’t wear green-and-white striped overalls!”

Then Daisy snapped her arm back at the real Luigi, before switching into a defensive martial arts pose. “And Mario doesn’t wear his thick, manly mustache styled in two, neat, perfectly symmetrical tufts. Who are you, doppelganger? I warn you, if you plan any treachery against my friends, you’ll have to step over my dead body first! If you have any honor, then give me your name!”

“I’m…Luigi Mario?”

Slowly, Daisy turned her head to look at the poster, advertising the championship match between Mario Mario…and Luigi Mario. “...Ooooh! So *you’re* his twin brother. I see the resemblance. Guess that means we’ll be competing with each other.”

The old Toad shook his head. “I already told ya, miss! You can’t compete in this tournament! It’s closed for entries!”

Daisy gasped. “I can’t compete? Nooooo! Please, good sir, have compassion! How am I supposed to express my feelings to the man of my dreams, if I do not prove my love to him with spectacular feats of arms, and victory on the field of battle?”

“I dunno. Buy him candy and flowers?”

“Candy and flowers? That’s what *I* would want as a gift. But Mario’s a man of action! A seeker of adventure! Everyone knows brave knights need to win grand tournaments, if they ever want to get a princess to notice them. So that’s what *I’ve* got to do! Where’s your sense of romance?”

“Eh, me and the Missus joust a bit, but we do all right. Sorry, Miss, but I can’t help ya. The tournament’s only open to Mister Mario Mario, and Mister Luigi Mario.”

Luigi tugged at his collar. “Erm, yes! Thank you, sir. Now, if you don’t mind, I’d like to get a caddy, please?”

The old Toad groaned. “What, now? Sorry, kid, I’m fresh out. Caddy union’s on strike.”

Luigi almost swooned. “But…how can I possibly compete with Mario, without a caddy?”

Daisy caught Luigi’s eye. “What’s a caddy?”

The old Toad snorted, jabbing a thumb at Luigi’s golf bag. “Heh. Ya know. Someone to carry his bags around. Be on the lookout for traps. Give him unsolicited advice.”

Daisy snatched up Luigi’s golf bag. “Aha! Just like a squire! That sounds noble enough. Very well, Sir Luigi. Despite our previous rivalry, I, Princess Daisy of Sarasaland, shall now serve as your loyal and obedient caddy. And if you find that I dishonor you, or fail in my duties in any way, you must beat me soundly, to teach me better.”

“What? I don’t wanna’ beat you! That’s cruel!”

Daisy patted Luigi’s hand softly. “Aw, thank you. You are truly a kind master. I shall strive to be worthy of your trust in me…”

Then Daisy wrapped her arm tight around Luigi’s neck, before smacking her own rump with her other hand. “...But if I’m being a handful, don’t be afraid to pop me one across the seat of my pants–Whap! Just like that–and tell me to behave like a princess should. That usually works. Now, quickly, Sir Luigi, to the field of battle!”

As Luigi was dragged along behind Daisy, they both ran smack into a big, fat, mustached man who had snuck up right behind them. Stumbling back, the man snarled. “Ay! Watch it!”

As Luigi looked the man over, he recognized the man’s clothing first. He was wearing Mario’s red hat and shirt, and blue overalls, but they were all much too small for the man wearing them. Only then did Luigi finally recognize his former bully. “Wa-Wario?”

Wario laughed maniacally, before stopping himself. “Wah, ha, ha! Dat’s right! I’ma…*not* Wario! I’m that wus, Mario! And I’ve come to claim my spot in this tournament!”

Daisy snatched Wario by the collar. “Hold on! You can’t be Mario! He’s supposed to be wearing striped overalls! Imposter! Impersonator! Impressionist! Have at thee, nave!”

Then, Daisy punched Wario right on the nose, and she didn’t hit like a girl.

Wario snarled and clutched his nose! “Agh! You crazy dame! That was a cheap shot!”

Daisy lowered herself into a boxing stance. “Then put ‘em up, Lardo McGee!”

“Oooh? You think I won’t hit you because you’re a woman? Well, joke’s on you! I ain’t *that* kind of sexist! I’m the kind your mother warns you about!”

Luigi stumbled between Daisy and Wario, holding them apart. “Please, no violence! There are children watching!”

Charging like a linebacker, Wario knocked Luigi aside to tackle Daisy against the front desk, before she quickly twisted to kick Wario under the jaw. Then she rolled to use Wario’s own momentum against him, sending him flying through the sign above the desk.

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“And, we’re back! I’m Gene Yuss, the golfer formerly known as the Greatest of the Great.”

“And I’m Billy Iwata, and so far it’s been a tense first few minutes for the Toadstool Tour championship.”

“That’s right, Billy, because Luigi is late, and absolutely nothing is happening! If he doesn’t arrive within ten minutes, he will, unfortunately, be forced to forfeit the match!”

Azalea shoved her way onto the TV screen. “Don’t worry, Mister Luigi will be here! He may be occasionally tardy, but he’d never shirk his responsibilities to the Widows and Orphans of the Mushroom Kingdom!”

Billy Iwata stroked his jutting chin, gesturing to the TV screen next to them in the studio. “We can only hope, and pray, that you are right, Azalea. For now, let’s watch as Mario practices his legendary driver.”

With a controlled swing, Mario sent an imaginary golf ball sailing through the air. Peach clutched Mario’s bag, biting her lip. “Do you think he got lost?”

Mario readied for his next practice swing. “Don’t worry, Peach, he’ll be here.”

As Mario delivered another perfect swing, Gene Yuss whistled, clutching tight to his fedora. “We’re watching a master of his craft here, folks. But will Luigi prove a worthy adversary?”

At that moment, Princess Daisy led Luigi past the on-site news crew, nursing a black eye. “You sure you don’t need to punish me, Luigi? I did pick a fight with your cousin, after all. By the way, that was a great haymaker you landed on him. He had me on the ropes for a while, once he broke out the crowbar. I might have started the fight with cousin Wario, but you sure as hell finished it!”

Luigi gagged, straining to break free of Peach’s headlock. “Wario’s *not* my cousin! He just says that to get a rise out of me.”

“So he’s a bully as well as a cad? That’s despicable! But the point remains, I’m the one who started the fight with the cheap shot. I feel terrible now, but he just made me so mad! I’d *definitely* get a bare-bottom spanking for behaving like that at home, and if my dad were here I’d ask him for one right now! We can call him if you like, so you can get his permission to spank me…It’ll have to be bare butt.”

“For the last time, I’m not gonna’ spank you, Daisy! My mama wouldn’t like it!”

“Huh. She sounds really cool! You know, you should introduce me to your mama, and I should introduce you to Dad. I’m sure if we explained the situation, she’d understand that spanking can be used as an act of love, not necessarily as an act of cruelty. After all, if I’m going to be your squire, and go on adventures with you, you’ll probably have to spank me sooner or later. Sometimes, when I get ornery, a spanking’s the only way to get through to me! It’s for my own good!”

“Well, I’m *not* gonna spank you, because I wouldn’t feel right doing it, so that’s that.”

“Wow. You’re really a man of strong convictions, Luigi. I respect that. In that case, I’ll just have to do my very best not to force you into a position where you’ll have no choice but to spank me, until I can persuade you by plain reason to do so without violating your conscience. Dang, you’re keeping me on my toes here.”

Daisy froze as she spotted Mario and Peach ahead of her. “Peach! Mario! At long last, I’ve finally found you, old friends! But now, we must face each other, as opponents, locked in honorable combat! I swear, upon my life, to give you nothing less than my absolute best effort!”

Peach blinked, then smiled sweetly. “That’s lovely, Daisy!”

Daisy pointing at Mario. “And beware, Sir Mario! For when last we met, I was but a dainty, helpless flower, trapped by the capricious whims of my cruel tormenter. But since you left me, I have trained day and night, night and day, awaiting the moment when I would show you my true strength! Behold…”

Daisy held Luigi’s arm aloft, but thanks to their height difference, she ended up dangling him an inch above the ground. “...For I have joined forces with your brother, Sir Luigi, thine own flesh and blood, that I may face you in battle…in the noble sport of golf!”

Mario slipped his first driver into his golf bag, and found his heavier driver. “Sup, Luigi? I see you’ve met Daisy. Sorry I wasn’t there to introduce ya’ proper.”

Luigi looked wildly back and forth from Mario, then to Peach, then to Daisy. “What is going on?”

Daisy set Luigi back on his feet, then grinned. “We’re winning.”

Meanwhile, back at the news crew, Billy Iwata and Gene Yuss stared in awe at the live footage of Daisy’s winning smile on screen.

Behind them, Princess Azalea groaned. “Now Daisy is here? …Oh, dear, oh dear!”

Billy snapped around in his seat to face Azalea. “Princess Daisy? Heir apparent to the imperial throne of Sarasaland. I take it she shares your passion for the Scottish game?”

“Huh? You mean golf? Um, yeah, I guess she comes to all my games, and stuff. I couldn’t ask for a more enthusiastic supporter.”

Gene Yuss spun his fedora on his index finger. “Then I take it she’ll be able to serve the caddy’s most essential, non-essential function: to offer Luigi killer tips on how to approach each hole.”

Azalea swallowed. “Well, funny thing about Daisy…ya see, the thing is…”

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As she watched Mario and Peach approach the first hole, Daisy stood tall with her fists on her hips. “Okay, Luigi. How do I play golf?”

“What? *I’m* the one playing for the championship title here.”

“Exactly. You’re clearly more experienced than me, so I’ll need to learn from your wisdom and experience if I’m to have any hope of defeating Mario. I’m not too proud to admit it.”

“But…you’re my caddy.”

“Yes. And as your ‘caddy,’ my sacred duty is to help you achieve total victory. But in order for me to help you, I need you to help me help you. How can I best serve you, Master Luigi? Instruct me!”

Luigi ran his fingers through his hair. “All right! Just…hand me my club, when I ask for one.”

Daisy nodded, then grabbed a club at random out of the golf bag, whipping it just shy of Luigi’s nose. “Aye, aye, sir! Like this?”

Luigi went cross eyed as he examined the club. “That’s…that’s a putter.”

Daisy nodded. “I see. So where do I find a golf club?”

“Ah–A putter *is* a golf club, it’s just not the right kind of golf club. I need a driver.”

“Aha! So it’s a puzzle! I have to solve it before the timer runs out!”

“Wait…isn’t your sister an international champion on the junior circuit?”

“You bet she is! That’s my kid sister for ya! I never miss one of her games.”

“Then, how do you *not* know this stuff?”

“Hmm…she *did* try to explain the rules to me once. For a while, I kinda got stuck on the idea of *not* trying to score the most points possible.”

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As Peach handed Mario his driver, she glanced at Luigi and Daisy behind her. “Mario, do you think we should say something?”

Mario practiced his swing. “Luigi looked me dead in the eye and told me he doesn’t want me to fight all his battles for him. I say it’s time to sink or swim.”

“So, you’re just going to let him sink?”

“Or let him swim. It’s a brother thing.”

“Oh? So what you’re saying is, because it’s ‘a brother thing’ that means I wouldn’t get it, since I’m only a girl?”

Mario smiled ruefully as he approached the tee. “I did *not* say that.”

Peach pretended to stick her nose in the air, but couldn’t hide her smile. “Perhaps you intended to *imply* it?”

“Most certainly not. But now I *will* say it: when it comes to ‘the brother thing’ between me and Luigi, you most certainly do *not* get it, Princess Toadstool.”

“You are incorrigible, Sir Mario.”

“Thank you, Princess, I try my best.”

Peach licked her finger and felt the wind. “Northwesterly wind, about twenty miles per hour. Better focus on your followthrough.”

Mario readied his first shot. “Yes, dear.”

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Luigi and Daisy’s heated argument about the rules of golf was cut short by a resounding thump. Luigi watched in awe as Mario’s trusty laneway drill shot carried the ball through the wind, and all the way to the final green.

Still holding the putter, Daisy pointed to the first hole. “Woah. Mario got it real close to the flag. That means he’s good.”

Luigi moaned, and approached the tee. “Hah…yes, my brother is very, very good at everything he does. First thing, set the ball on the tee.”

Daisy quickly handed Luigi the putter, then fumbled for the golf balls. “You got it, chief!"

Luigi glanced at the putter in his hand, suddenly noticing it. “Next, we’ll need a driver. It’s the heavy looking one with one flat–”

With a single graceful motion, Daisy whipped out the driver, and swung it with one arm, sending the golf ball rocketing well past the green. A Lakitu news cameraman, riding on his trusty flying cloud, followed the ball until it disappeared in the infinite blue sky, landing somewhere on the second or third hole of the golf course. “Huh, think I overshot it.”

Luigi swallowed, then glanced at the scorekeeper. “Um…can I get a mulligan?”

A severe looking Koopa woman wearing red glasses shook her head. “You can’t ask for a mulligan in tournament play.”

A snazzily dressed Goomba guy bit his lip. “Hmm…though it was his caddy who made the shot. Looks like we’ll have to consult *The Mushroom Kingdom Golf Association’s Big Book of Rules,* on this one.”

As the scorekeepers buried themselves in the massive tome, Daisy bent low to whisper to Luigi.

“Okay, how’s my form? I’m here to learn!”

Luigi almost choked. “Daisy, I’m the only one who’s supposed to hit the ball. Not you. A caddy’s job is just to help me get set up. Ya know, tell me if my stance is crooked or something.”

“Ooh! Just like in martial arts. I know all about proper fighting stances. Here, look–”

Daisy grabbed Luigi’s wrists, then nudged his feet with hers to force him into a wide stance. “This is called a horse stance. Cuz it’s like you’re riding into battle on a mighty steed, see? Then you take a moment to find your center, visualize your attack, take a deep, controlled breath, and then, with one, fluid motion–”

Finally, the two score keepers shrugged and slapped the thick book shut. “Ah, what the heck, we can give you a mulligan. But only just this once!”

Swinging Luigi’s arms like a puppet, Daisy sent the golf ball flying, using the putter club. “–Whammo! You strike with your whole body!”

The Lakitu cameraman ducked as the second golf ball whizzed over his head, before the wind carried it toward the green in a wide arc. Finally, it slammed down into the first hole, and the crowd erupted with polite applause. On the TV screen for the live news coverage, a cheerful virtual announcer declared, “Wow! A hole in one!”

Mario and Peach froze, then turned to stare at Daisy and Luigi in awe.

Still holding Luigi’s hands in hers, Daisy pointed the putter like a sword. “Ha ha! What's up? I'm new, but golf is my thing! And I'll go toe-to-toe to prove it!"

Then Daisy whispered in Luigi’s ear. “Just stick with me, Luigi! Together, we’re sure to win this thing!”

As he watched the score board update, adding a big, fat, beautiful “1” by the image of his face for the first hole, Luigi swallowed. “...Ya know, we just might.”

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After the most cheesy 1990s video effects transition in history, Billy Iwata's face pressed onto the TV screen, "Well folks, this is certainly the most thrilling game of golf I've ever witnessed."

Gene Yuss tossed his fedora at Billy's face, before catching it and pressing his way on screen. "You said it Billy. For a game this epic, this monumental, this intense, there's only one way to properly present it to the viewing public…with our new, cutting-edge, 80s-montage-a-rama video technology!"

Azalea groaned. "Ugh! Can't we just talk about the crazy strategy of this game? Daisy is totally–"

An 80s montage sequence began to play, accompanied by the song *You're the Best Around* as sung by Joe Espotio. There was a clear pattern to the clips. First, Mario would deliver an excellent swing, either approaching the green, or sinking his shot with a putter to score a birdie, and sometimes even an eagle, on every hole. Then, Princess Daisy the puppet master and Luigi the puppet would easily clear the same hole, usually with an eagle or a hole-in-one. Every one of these clips was punctuated by Daisy shouting either a defiant challenge, or a cheer of victory, still dangling Luigi from her grip like a toy dall.

"This shot's soooo easy."

"Yes, yes! I rule! I rule!"

Mario and Peach maintained a quiet sense of dignity as they fell further and further behind with each hole, before Daisy started poking her head in from the side of the camera to photobomb them.

"Are you just gonna let us win!?"

As the lyrics to *You're the Best Around* wrapped up, the news station cut to the 18th and final hole.

The screen blipped and Azalea's annoyed face appeared on screen. "Ugh! Finally! Now we can get back to the actual game. After an…outlandish display from his caddy, Mister Luigi has adopted an unconventional style, something never before attempted in professional golf. And thus far, this stratgy seems to have paid off. Despite Mario playing a more aggressive game, handily beating his personal record for the course so far, Mister Luigi commands an impressive 8-point lead. But the final hole features several traps. Par for this hole is 5, so if Daisy can…excuse me, if Mister Luigi can get yet another hole-in-one, or *anything* better than a triple bogey, he wins by default…"

Gene Yuss stroked the brim of his fedora. “You ever think about how inherently funny the word ‘bogey’ is? Like, we don’t just have, plus 1, plus 2, and plus 3 over par. No, we call it bogey, double bogey, and triple bogey.”

Billy Iwata nodded sagely. “That’s right, Azalea. If Daisy–ahem, I mean, if *Luigi*–manages to nail this shot, it will set a new record for the course. But in the inverse scenario, if Luigi *somehow* manages to screw this up, it will be the single, biggest choke in the history of sports, since, well…”

“Since I choked against Mario in the 1999 Game Boy Open Championship?”

“I mean, I was trying to avoid saying it. You doing okay, buddy?”

Gene Yuss cracked open a bottle of chuckola cola. “Eh, last stage of coping with grief is acceptance.”

Azalea charged forth to grab the camera. “So, basically, folks, whatever score Mario gets, Luigi has to *not* get 8 more than that.”

…

Mario considered the course before him, lined with sand traps, and a water trap just beyond the final green. “Gimme the driver.”

Peach shook her head. “Mario, you need something with shorter distance, like the five-iron.. If you overshoot, it’s going right in the water.”

“I’ve got to nail an eagle…at the very least. A drive is my only shot for a hole-in-one.”

“You’re counting Luigi getting a triple bogey no matter what. Play it safe, and don’t widen the gap.”

Mario fixed his glove, and held out his hand. “No, I’m *narrowing* the gap. Driver, please.”

Peach pulled out the driver and offered it to Mario. “Out of curiosity, how would you advise *me* to handle this approach, assuming it was just the two of us playing this hole?”

Mario examined the driver, before he smiled, his mustache curling. “On second thought, let’s go with the three-iron. Good suggestion, caddy.”

Peach beamed. “You’re welcome, champ.”

Mario's first shot with the three-iron cleared the long line of sand traps, before coming to rest just short of the final green. Mario switched to a wedge club for maximum control, and with a clean chip swing, sunk the ball on his second swing.

On the TV screen, the virtual announcer cheered for the viewers watching at home. "Chip in! Ooh! Nice albatross!"

The score board updated, leaving Mario with a final score of 63, to Luigi's 55.

Daisy grabbed Luigi's hand, then grabbed the driver out of the bag. "All right, Luigi, let's win this thing!"

Luigi swallowed as he noticed the driver. "Um, Princess Daisy…your highness? Maybe we'd better–"

Daisy swung Luigi's arms to send the ball rocketing down the lane. It landed an inch to the side of the final hole, before rolling down the green, and into the water trap. Daisy growled. "Shoot! I'll get it!"

Luigi groaned. "That's okay, Daisy, we'll just take the penalty stroke."

"Oooh, do they use a paddle or a cane to give us that? I can take your penalty stroke for ya'!"

"No, no, it's called stroke-and-distance relief. They just add one to our score, and we can retake the shot with a provisional ball."

Luigi held up a new golf ball and called to the score keepers. "Provisional ball!"

Nodding furiously, Daisy set the ball on the tee, before winding up the next shot. "Woah. Golf has got to be the wildest sport I've ever played, and I've played Bob-bomb-Basketball. Okay, I'm gonna put more backspin on this one. That way, when it lands on the green, it will counteract the natural downward curve of the hill."

"That's…not a bad idea, actually, but first we should–"

"Smack it's bottom!" Daisy slammed the golf ball into the stratosphere, so that it went sailing well beyond the green, and past the watery horizon.

Daisy pursed her lips. "Hmmm, there appears to be a flaw in my strategy. I know, we'll use the putter! I had beginner's luck with that one."

"Okay, that actually *is* a bad idea. We should save the putter for–"

With an echoing crack, Daisy sent the golf ball ripping sideways at an acute angle. The ball tore through the flying Lakitu cameraman's camera like a sniper rifle bullet. Daisy growled. "Agh! Dang it! My head is *not* the game! We got to get it together, Luigi!"

Luigi desperately tried to hold up a hand to signal the scorekeepers, struggling against Princess Daisy's iron grip. "Back-on-the-line relief, please!"

"A *what* relief? Is that, like, calling in a relief pitcher? Cuz I can come in clutch on the pitcher's mound, if you need to take a break."

"No, no, no, it means we take the penalty, and move forward to the line adjacent to the point where the golf ball last crossed over the playable area. Um, line, please?"

The Lakitu cameraman pointed down at the smashed remains of his camera. "Eh, hereabouts I'd say."

Luigi slapped his face, with only a little help from Daisy. "What, ten yards? That's it? Ah, whatever. At least we're getting a bit closer."

Daisy hauled Luigi to the new line by the back of his overalls and set him down, before immediately grabbing his arms to set up the next shot. "Atta' boy, Luigi. Don't worry, we'll keep trying every club until we find the right one!"

Daisy randomly snatched Luigi's chipper (which he'd picked up to help him compensate for his tendency to "chunk" a lot of his short wedge shots), and sent the golf ball zipping down the field. It ripped a whole clean through the flag, before sailing into the water.

Daisy growled. "Argh! Okay, I'm definitely forgetting something important…oh, yeah!"

Daisy held Luigi's hand up to her mouth to call. "Foooore! …Cuz' that was our fourth stroke, right?"

"N-not quite! You see, you're actually supposed to call out before every shot, as a warning."

"Wow! I'm so glad I have you here to explain the rules to me, Luigi. I'd totally lost without you at my side."

Daisy snatched a golf club at random, and pulled out a three-wood club, a versatile club designed for a balance of long distance and control. Daisy roared as she wound up Luigi for his shot. "Fiiiiive!!!"

As Daisy swung Luigi's arms for him, sparks flew as the club connected with the golf ball, and sent it soaring over the horizon, like a flaming comet.

…

Meanwhile in the Koopa Kingdom, Lord Bowser, the King of the Koopas, the Great Demon King emerged from the highest tower of his impenetrable fortress, wearing a Scottish cap and kilt, holding a ten-foot iron pole mounted with a spiked golf club head. “A new power is rising! Its victory is at hand!”

The assembled hordes of the Koopa Tribe slammed their golf clubs against the ground and roared a battle cry.

“This night, the land will be stained with mud balls! March to the Mushroom Kingdom! Leave none with a 1-Up on you! To golf, and to war!”

With a shimmer of light in the distance, a flaming golf ball shot down to slam against Bowser’s face, knocking him into the ground with such force, he left behind a crater on the stone floor. Bowser clutched his bleeding nose. “Bwaaargh! Who the hell didn’t yell ‘fore’?”

…

Daisy held her hand up like a sailor to peer at the flag in the distance. “Okay, driver’s out, chipper’s out, putter’s out. Any suggestions, Tiger?”

Luigi swallowed, straining to reach the golf club bag. “L-Let’s, go with the hybrid. It’s a bit more forgiving.”

Instantly, Daisy helped Luigi grab the hybrid club. “Sweet. I *love* forgiveness. I ask for it all the time. Siiiiix!”

Finally, Daisy and Luigi’s combined swing didn’t send the golf ball out of bounds. It plopped down into the last sand trap before the final green. Luigi nodded furiously as Daisy carried him along, holding him by the suspenders with one hand, his golf bag with the other. “Wahoo! That’s progress. Now we just need a sand wedge!”

“Luigi, now’s not the time for a sandwich! I’ll make you my famous hero-club sandwich *after* we win this thing!”

“Oh, no, no. A sand *wedge!* It’s got a nice, soft, round bottom on it.”

Daisy sniffed as she set Luigi down on the sand in front of her. “Ahem! Luigi, you are in the presence of a lady. But also…nice! There’s nothing I like more than a nice, soft, round bottom. Incidentally, what size of overalls do you and Mario wear? I need ideas for Christmas gifts.”

Luigi blushed madly. “Kaff! Now, Daisy, that’s not exactly something I’m comfortable sharing with someone I’ve only just–”

“Just hit it! Seven!” With her next swing, Daisy sent sand flying, along with the golf ball, and a Pokey, a cactus-like bad guy, who had been buried in the sand, awaiting its chance to strike.

The ball came bouncing to a halt at the very edge of the green. Luigi whooped. “Yahoo! Now I just need my chipper, and this tournament’s in the bag!”

Daisy shook her head as she set Luigi down, then snatched out an approach wedge. “No, no, Luigi. The chipper is out. It’s got bad luck. I think I remember Azalea telling me something about using a ‘wedgie club’ for when you’re this close to the flag. Eight!”

Daisy smacked the ball at a sharp vertically-angled lob. Unfortunately, the ball came bouncing to a halt on the exact opposite side of the green embankment. Daisy pouted. “Hmm, this whole game seems a bit counter-intuitive.”

“What? No, Daisy! Just give me my chipper club!”

Daisy rolled her eyes and blew a raspberry. “Pfft! I told you, Luigi, it’s cursed with bad luck! Trust me, I’m your caddy!”

“But I’m not confident with my wedge shots. The chipper is more forgiving.”

Daisy nodded, then grabbed the heavy hybrid out of the golf bag. “Okay, then you need the hybrid?”

Luigi started waving his hands animatedly, in traditional Italian fashion, along with Daisy, who was still clinging tight to him. “No, Daisy, I need you to listen to me. You’ve been talking over me this whole game, but I have something important to say. I *need* my chipper to make this shot.”

“Hold on, isn’t a chipper like a training-wheel club for beginners? You don’t need that! Just go for the wedgie club! I believe in you, Luigi, with all my heart and soul!”

“...Thank you, Princess Daisy. But I want to win, and if I win, I want to win this game the right way.”

“That’s right! And, as your caddy, I’m going to help you win.”

Finally, Luigi broke free of Daisy’s grip, spinning to face her, eye-to-eye. “No, Daisy. I appreciate all your help, but I need to make this last shot…on my own.”

Daisy gasped, her eyes watery. “Are we…breaking up?”

Luigi waved his hands. “No, no, no. It’s not that at all. But you see, Mario and I had to overcome a lot of intense obstacles to get to this point, and we did it together. But now, we’re playing *against* each other, not as enemies…but as brothers.”

Daisy blinked. “Ooooooh! This is a ‘brother thing,’ isn’t it?”

Luigi sighed with relief. “Exactly.”

Daisy snapped both her fingers and made two finger guns. “Got it. You want to stand on your own two feet, and compete with your brother on even, beautifully-mowed ground. Mad respect for that…um, may I still be your caddy, please?”

Luigi smiled. “Of course! There’s no one I’d rather have by my side! …Um, may I have the chipper please?”

Daisy rifled through the golf bag, then peered into it, looking nervous. “Uh, think I tossed it a hundred yards back. Want me to go fetch it? It’ll take me about 20 seconds if I sprint.”

Luigi held up a hand as he examined the bunker closely. “That’s okay…I’ve been using it as a crutch. See the steep slope on this bunker? This calls for a lob wedge. I need a soft landing.”

Daisy’s eyes flicked back and forth between the remaining wedge clubs. “...Um…”

“It’s got an ‘LW’ printed on it.”

“Oh, sweet! As in ‘Luigi Winner!’ Cuz’ you’re a winner, Luigi!”

Luigi accepted the golf club, and prepared for his swing. “Thank you, Daisy.”

Then, with a controlled breath, he chipped the ball towards the flag, but winced as he felt too much spin on his follow through. The crowd oohed as the ball bounced once, rolling straight toward the hole. Then, the spin carried the ball past the hole, down the steep bunker, and all the way to the edge of the green.

Mario and Peach both aahed with disappointment, along with the rest of the crowd. On the news cast, Gene Yuss shook his head, pulling his fedora down over his face in shame. “Looks like Luigi just lost his chance to clinch the title outright.”

Azalea held her hands up, as if in prayer. “But Mister Luigi can still get a draw, if he makes this shot. Then the game goes to a play off for the tie breaker.”

Silently, Luigi and Daisy approached the ball, and Luigi practiced a controlled shot, before he took the final swing. This time, the ball plopped down softly two inches from the hole, rolling until it hovered at the very edge. The crowd held its collective breath, before the wobbling ball came

to rest, half hovering over the edge of the hole. Billy Iwata shook his head, speaking in the distinctively gentle tone of a golf announcer. “And that’s the game, folks. Mario wins the First Toadstool Tour Grand Championship.”

Ignoring the cheers from the crowd behind hi, Luigi sighed, then gestured to Daisy. “Putter, please.”

Daisy nodded and handed the putter to Luigi. "You can do this, I just know it!"

Luigi lightly tapped the golf ball to knock it off balance and into the hole, and the crowd offered polite applause. At that moment, Daisy clapped Luigi sharply across the back. “Wow, Luigi. You really came within a hair’s breadth of winning, only to snatch defeat from the jaws of complete and total victory!”

“...Yup.”

“And all the while, you had me, Princess Daisy of Sarasaland, right here, ready to make the shot for you! But, in the name of fair play, you wanted to take the shot, all on your own…even if that meant facing the crippling humiliation of defeat, and having it all broadcast on national television no less!”

“Pretty much.”

Daisy pulled Luigi into a headlock. “Dang, Luigi! You’ve got guts! You’re not even afraid of being a loser! Now, that’s what I call a winner!”

Daisy planted a light smooch on Luigi’s cheek. “Mwah! …Now, all that’s left to do is to find Mario, and confess how I truly feel about him.”

Mario and Peach strolled up right behind them. Mario cleared his throat. “Ahem, good game, you two.”

Daisy felt a shiver travel up and down her spine. “M-M-M-Mario? Bwah ha ha! Yes! I wasn’t sure for a while, but I’m now convinced: golf is most definitely a real sport. And as for you, Peach…”

Daisy snapped her arm to point at Peach’s face. “You may have bested me this time, but don’t let it go to your head. Cuz’ I’m gonna train even harder to best you next time, at whatever contest of strength, skill, or cunning you can conceive. When next you see me, you shall find me to be the most fearsome caddy you have ever crossed clubs with.”

Peach clapped her hands, skipping like a little girl. “Sweet! I can’t wait!”

Mario stroked his chin, looking at Peach teasingly. “Hmm…maybe I should ask Daisy to be my caddy next time!”

Peach grabbed Mario's hand, squeezing it with surprising force. "Oh, no you don't! I'm Daisy's rival caddy, so that means you're stuck with me. It's a Princess thing."

Daisy snapped her arm to point at Mario's face. "That's absolutely right! And as for you, Mario…I have something to say, and I'm gonna say it right to your mustached face! I…I…I *still* haven't forgiven you for saving my life from Tatanga! I solemnly vow that one day, I shall become a warrior of fierce renown, so that I may save your life in return, and finally repay my debt."

"That's really swell of you, Daisy, but you really don't owe me a thing. I helped you because it was the right thing to do, not because I wanted a reward or anything."

Daisy posed like superman. "Of course you did! Because you're a gallant cavalier! But fear not, for the blood debt I owe to you is no cheap, transactional matter."

As Daisy became more and more swept away by the force of her own argument, she gestured to her heart, and then pointed to the heavens. "Nay! It is a debt of honor to myself! To repay you not with silver nor gold, but with my eternal gratitude and friendship! To strive to live every day of the life you have given to me, knowing it is a precious gift from above. And to become a hero to others, in their hour of utmost need, and stand on their behalf as a paragon of righteous courage!"

Daisy rolled back her head and laughed, before she sneezed, then relaxed her posture. "Ah ha ha ha ha! Ah-choo! …Ahem! Anyway, that's what I came all this way to tell you Mario."

Mario beamed. "Thanks, Princess Daisy. I'm honored to be considered your friend. I look forward to competing with you again…Not to mention watching you and Princess Peach compete with each other."

Daisy clapped her hands. "Ooh! Anyone for tennis?"

Peach sighed. "Maybe next time. For now, I just want to take the air."

Mario shrugged, and held Peach's hand. "I'll go with ya. Make sure you get home safe."

Peach sniffed. "Hmph! Sure you wouldn't rather take a lovely stroll with *someone else?"*

"What, with who? Like Bowser? How else am I supposed to stop another kidnapping attempt."

"You know, it's not like I'll get kidnapped if you take your eyes off me for more than one second."

"That's exactly what you said when you asked me and Luigi to escort you across the Teehee Valley. And guess what happened?"

“You took your eyes off me, that’s what happened.”

Daisy waited until Mario and Peach strolled out of ear shot, then wiped the sweat on her brow. “Whew! This is gonna’ be harder than I thought. Hey, Luigi, how do *you* think I should break it to Mario that I’m absolutely crazy about him?”

Luigi swallowed as he lost himself in Daisy’s big, bright sea-green eyes.. “Um…maybe you try looking each other in the eye, and saying something like… ‘I think I’m in love with you’?”

Daisy held the longing gaze for a few more moments, before she blinked. “Wow. You’re braver than me Luigi. See, it’s true I love to go on adventures, and battle the enemies of Sarasaland with my dainty white-gloved fists, but I’m still a girl at heart! And nothing’s harder than for a girl to express the deep, hidden desires of her inmost heart. Take you and me, for instance, I’d have absolutely no problem looking you right in the eye, just like this, and saying, ‘Dude, I think I love you!’”

Daisy leaned in close to Luigi’s face, before wrapping an arm around his shoulder and marching down back toward the Mushroom Kingdom Golf Club House. “…Because, you and me are–like–dudes now. But my feelings for Mario, see, are more like a soft fluttering in my heart, which can’t be expressed in words. Man, you’re so easy to talk to, Luigi. I could go on talking to you all day! But enough of me talking about me! Why don’t *you* take a turn talking about me, Luigi?”

Luigi swallowed a lump in his throat. “I…I think I’d like you to be my caddy, from now on…Forever and always.”

Daisy held a hand to her heart. “Aw! I’d be honored. Which reminds me…”

Daisy pulled Luigi into a headlock. “We still have to take our penalty strokes for whiffing that golf championship.”

“What? No, no, Daisy, that was already counted in the score, remember.”

“Thanks to you teaching me all about golf, I know that! But this is a totally separate thing I do to stay sharp. See, I find if I voluntarily submit to a good, hard spanking, it helps motivate me to do my very best. I’ve got the old wooden paddle stashed in my locker. It’s a memento from my sorority days with Peach at Princess Academy. You should have seen our butts! We could hardly sit through class on any given day!”

“What? No! I said that I’m not interested in punishing you! I’m a conscientious objector!”

“That is super cool of you Luigi. But don’t worry! A paddling for losing is not a form of punishment. It’s a form of motivation! It’s completely different!”

“Different how?”

Daisy kicked open the door to the girl’s locker room, and snatched a hefty wooden paddle out of her locker. It had a series of decorative carvings of red mushrooms and fire-flowers, along with little holes to cut down on wind resistance. The words, “Heat for the Seat” were printed along the center in block letters. “It’ll be faster if I just show you. C’mon, Tiger. First, I’ll do you, then you do me.”

“Mama mia!” howled Luigi.

Will Luigi escape the clutches of the tenacious tomboy, Princess Daisy?

Does Luigi even want to escape from her clutches?

Are you sitting at the edge of your chair, urgently asking yourself when, oh when, will you discover the shocking answers to these questions?

Well, too bad, Paisanos!

Perhaps we should all just respect Luigi and Daisy’s privacy, before we earn a paddling ourselves.

The End!